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State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

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PRESS RELEASE

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STATE ASSISTS CONCORDIA PARISH Water Shortage in Ferriday

Baton Rouge, LA (August 24, 2011) – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), Louisiana National Guard (LANG) and Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) are responding to a water shortage in the Town of Ferriday. Today, Ferriday officials requested 14 military water tanks to be placed at various locations including a nursing home, hospital and five schools. The rest will be strategically placed around town for citizens who need it. Those resources will be in Ferriday tomorrow.

Interim GOHSEP Director Pat Santos said, "We have folks on the ground in Ferriday and we are working side-by-side with local officials to ensure that residents have access to safe and clean drinking water."

"DHH is working closely with local and state officials to ensure residents have access to safe drinking water," said Dr. Jimmy Guidry, State Health Officer. "In the meantime, I encourage all affected residents to take advantage of the resources provided by the National Guard. Residents should always stay hydrated, but it is especially important considering the extreme temperatures our state is experiencing."

DHH officials are in close contact with the operators of the water system and the community in Ferriday assessing the water system. Ferriday's water operator issued a "boil water advisory" on August 18, and a regional DHH sanitarian is contacting all of the retail food establishments (restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes and day cares) to remind them it is still in effect. Individuals working and residing in areas under the "boil water advisory" should bring water to a rolling boil, continue for a minute, then let cool before consuming. A GOHSEP regional coordinator is also in Ferriday working closely with parish emergency officials.

Water is currently being pumped into the Ferriday Water Tank; however, it is believed that the problem is in the water lines going out to the residents. A combination of decreased supply and

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increased demand related to heat and drought precipitated this problem. The water level at the source in the Marengo Bend is unusually low due to drought, an issue exacerbated by the fact that the water plant has only one functional filtering system. Increased use of filtering limits the amount of water available to be pumped into the tanks, causing the entire system to lose pressure.

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